

## [A. M. Garrett]

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Folk stuff - Rangelore

Gauthier, Sheldon F.

Rangelore.

Tarrant co., [Dist?], #7 [27?]

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A.[M?]. Garrett, 83 living at 1115 College Ave Fort Worth, Texas, was born Feb. 18, [1855?], at Shelby co., Texas, on a farm and ranch owned by his father, A.B. Garrett. At the conclusion of the Civil War, A.B. Garrett moved to [McCollman?] co., After a period of two years the family moved from [McCellman?] Co., to Coryell co., and engaged in the cattle business. A.B. Garrett was among the first [drevsers?] which drove cattle to the Northern market. A.M. Garnett entered Baylor University, at [Waco?], at the age of 17. At the age of 19, he taught school in the [rual?] districts for two years. When he was 21 years old he established a ranch in [?] co., in which business [?] remained for several years.

His story of range life follows:

"I was born, reared and lived in Texas, all my life to date. My place of birth was at a farm my father, A.B. Garrett, owned. The time of my birth was Feb. 18, 1855. Our farm was located in the Sabine River bottom, in Shelby co.,

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"A short time after [the?] Civil War ended, father moved his family to McCellan co., and engaged in the cattle business. I was about 11 years old at the time.

"The range was [open?] and free at the time we moved to [McCellan?] co., so the thing a person needed to establish a cattle ranch was cattle, saddle horses and a adequate water holes.

"During those days there roamed on the range thousands of cattle which were unbranded, and became know as Mavericks.

"I shall state briefly, how the term Maverick became used as a plied to an unbranded critter, and the reason so many unbranded cattle were [on?] the range at the close of the 2 war.

"A man named Maverick, grandfather of the present Congress-man Maverick of Texas, was a large rancher prior to the Civil War, and [allowed?] his calf crop to go unbranded during the later years of the war. At the close of the war there were thousands of his cattle without brands. Therefore, in Maverick's section, folks would say, "there is a Maverick", when refering to an unbranded critter. The term was taken up by others, and in a short time it was in general use through the range country of Texas.

"Maverick [was?] not the only rancher who did not brand their cattle as the animals were bred and produced. Many others neglected to brand and mark their cattle. The reason they neglected their herds, was because after the [first?] year of the war, Texas became, for all practical purposes, isolated from the Southern States E. of the Mississippi River, and the section was where the only market existed for our Texas cattle during those trying days.

"Being cut off from the market, the ranchers found themselves with worthless stock, so far as a market was concerned. In fact, the value of cattle, in Texas, was so low one would lose money paying hired help to attend a herd. Therefore, the ranchers gave very little, if any, attention to their herds. The herds multiplied rapidly. Thus, when the [war?] ceased,

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there were thousands of unbranded cattle over all the range, and no one knew to whom the animals belonged.

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"Immediately following the close of the war, there existed a demand for beef, but Texas did not have an adequate market. Her Southern market was depressed, because of the financial condition of the Southern States at the time. There was no money in the South and the prices [?] low.

"During the late 60s and early 70s, railroads builded into [?], and that placed shipping facilities close enough to our range so it was practical to drive herds to the railroads.

"Following the completion of the railroads extention into Kans., [simulstaneous?] therewith, market centers appeared. The principal market points were Camp Supply, For Dodge and Kansas City.

"When these markets were established, demands and prices for cattle [multiplied?] in a short time. Then followed a prosperous period for the cattlemen of Texas, which continued, more or less, unabated until the panic of 1893.

"Father anticipated a mighty upturn in the cattle business when he learned about the railroads extending Westward. Basing his action on the well founded conclusions, he devoted his efforts to creating a large herd.

"We moved to McCellan co., for the purpose of securing a more suitable ranges. [We?] located on the Brazos River, where we operated for two years and then moved to [Coryell?] co., Our location in [Coryell?] co., was on the Colorado River, S. of Gatesville.

"It is obvious to anyone, that with the range being open, 4 it was impossible for a person to indentify any particular unbranded critter as belonging to him. Because of this fact, there took form a sort of gentlemens agreement to govern the branding of the [Marvicks?], and

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the only logical rule, it was that a rancher had the privilege of branding the unbranded cattle which were found with his critters or grazing on the range under his control.

“There were many persons who started a herd by the simple process of locating a watering place, adopting a brand and then going out on the range to hunt and brand Mavericks.

“When we moved to McCellan co., father had a few cattle; [perhaps?] [500?]. We branded all the Mavericks we could find in our section with our 'AG' brand. I, at the time, was about 11 years old and large enough to help ride the range. Father hired two hands, with whom I worked and all we did was to gather and brand mavericks.

“When we moved to Coryell co., we had a herd 1500 cattle. In Coryell co., we continued thur process of branding all stock in our section, and with the natural increas, our herd soon numbered up to better than 5000.

“Our camp, at first, we consisted of tents for shelter, which we used when inclement weather existed. When the weather was element, we slept outside. Blankets were kept in the [oone?] of the chuck wagon and when nights were chilly, we would roll in a cover, otherwise, we did not.

“Our food was coarse, but whole-some. It consisted principally of beef, beans, both corn and wheat brand and dried fruit. We 5 also, generally managed to have some canned vegetables. Black coffee was supplied in large quantities as was necessary to satisfy the appetite of our waddies and they drank a large amount of the breverage.

“The cook was good camp cook and was especially good at cooking meat and beans. He varied the manner of cooking the beef and beans, so the two foods did not become tiresome.

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"Living as we did in the open, our appetite was always [?]. One would arise each morning with an excellent appetite and would relish the broiled steak, sour-dough bread, sop, lick and black coffee.

"Sickness was a rare condition among we waddies, and we were always able to stay on the job to do what was necessary, even if it was two or three days and nights without rest, which happened occasionally.

"While the range was open and the cattle grazed where their desires lead the herd, we rode the range constantly during the day keeping the cattle bunched and more or less to our range section. After the herd bedded down at night we left just one rider one duty at a time to keep watch, unless inclement weather was existing or [threatening?].

"It was necessary to keep several riders on duty when inclement weather was apparent, because in the event a storm set in the herd would tend to drift and during severe weather, would drift fast and far, unless held back. Then when thunder and lightening were persisting, there always was danger of a stampede starting, with its resulting loss, unless the riders were on hand to hold the run down to the minimum.

"I have experienced periods of two and three days and nights when our entire crew, of six to eight riders, was on duty the whole time [?] out any rest. During the winter was the period of the year when inclement and threatening weather would persist for several successive days, at Occasionally, during the winter, a persisting sleet and rain storm, accompanied with cold, would set in. Such weather was the hardest kind of weather to work in and, also, required the most work, because the cattle would insist on drifting with the storm. Just before a storm would arrive, it was the cattle's instinct which enabled the animal to realize a storm was on its way and would want to drift to shelter. The only shelter was the gullies, wood brake or hills.

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"During the years when cattle roamed the open range, there were a few winter storms when thousands of cattle perished from exposure. My memory does not serve me well as it did in the farmer days, but I think it was during the late 80s, thousands of cattle perished on the range. The storm started with rain, turned to sleet and then turned to snow with low temperature. The inclement weather continued for a week or more.

During the storm, a large number of the weaker cattle perished from exposure to the cold. Then, when the storm subsided the ground was coated with ice, and snow, covering the grass which prevented grazing. This condition resulted in many more cattle 7 perishing from starvation.

"Many ranchers were ruined by reasons of their cattle loss during the siege of weather. One could travel over the range for miles and never be out of sight of dead animals.

"Father's loss was about 50 percent, but he was able to meet the disaster. He even withstood the attack by heel-flies on the cattle which followed the coming of mild weather.

"The heel-fly is so named because it attacks the cattle in the heel. Evidently, the fly has a painful sting, because when one of the flies hits an animal, the critter will throw its tail in the air, let a [?] snort and start running for a bog or a water-hole.

"The heel-fly is very wearing to the stock and continued attacks from swarms of the flies, will prevent grazing and keep the cattle standing in water or a bog, where they can keep their heels submerged. The cattle will lose wight and finally die. During the heel-fly acreage the cattle crowded the bogs and river in the locality. We were kept busy pulling critters out of bogs, but the animals would go back the second a fly hit it. Many of the cattle became so weak that they become mired and died, before we could get to the animal and pull it out of the mierer. We were faced with a herculean task which was beyoud our ability to perform completly. We worked, both horses and men, to exhaustion dragging mired critters out of bogs.

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Our method of dragging out a mired critter was to put a loop around its horns and with the rope tied to the horn of the saddle the horse would pull the animal out.

“Our next most dreaded difficulty which we were compelled to encounter was the stampedes. You may attempt to picture in your mind what a stampede of several thousand longhorn cattle is like, but one can't visualize the actual scene. I shall attempt to draw a [ental?] picture of what the old rawhide viewed and contended with during a cattle run.

“Of course, during a storm we were expecting a possible run and were on the watch for it, but during clement weather a stampede is not looked for unless something scares the cattle. Many things can scare a herd. For instance, a wolf which runs into a herd to pull down a calf or something that may startle just one animal the fear caused to the one animal will spread through the whole herd instantly. While a herd is on their own ground it is not so easily scared, but when bedded off their home range, for instance, when on a drive, the herd is prone to stampede over [triffles?] These conditions, mentioned, are what we had to be on guard against at all times.

“The herd may be bedded and arise instantly. Looking at a herd arising, appears as if the earth is heaving up with an accompanying roar, a swish like sound, and the clashing of horns. While the cattle are running, the pounding to their feet on the earth sounds as the roll of many muffled drums. The clashing of the horns given off a sound similar that many muffled cymbols. The two sounds is quite a symphony, but broken by the discordance yell of the waddies trying to divert the hreds attention and put 9 and put the animals to milling

“What I mean by milling is to start the cattle to running in a circle, instead of straight away. If the herd was not scared too badly and not running too fast, the critters will follow their leaders. Our job was to force the leading critters from their straight course. That was performed by riding at the side and to the front of the leading animals and crowding the critters.

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"Most of the time we could accomplish our purpose in stopping a run, but occasionally we would fail. If we failed the cattle would be scattered hither and yond'.

"Of course, while on the home range, a scattered herd was not so disastrous, because we could eventually gather the cattle and those which we could not locate at the time, we would find during the following roundup. So far as the [breeding?] stock was concerned, we were not so much concerned about those becoming scattered, but it was the market cattle we did not want to lose track of and be delayed in their sale until after the roundup.

"Suppose it was dark and storming while a stampede was in progress, which it was often often was. Then imagine, if you can, riding at the head of several thousand wild, frightened and running cattle, and while riding, crowding your mount against the running cattle trying to force the animals off their course. Suppose your horse stumbled and threw you in front of the running cattle? Of course, the result of such event is obvious. Talk about daring riders, that was one [position?] the word daring does not express strong enough; sand in your gizzard, as the cowhand use to say, expresses such riders more accurately. 10

"While on a drive with a herd is when a stampede was liable to cause our worse loss. Then we would be in a [strangeecountry?] and if any of our cattle strayed away, most likely our [strays?] [w?] would be a permanent loss. Of course, the critters would eventually mingle some other herd, but if we, from Texas, were driving a herd in Kans., when [the?] run took place we would not be in Kans., during the roundup to cut out our brand.

"Here in Texas, each rancher would have his cowhands working in the roundup crews and as the cattle would be gathered, the different [brands?] would be [separated?], held together and driven back to their home range.

"During the severe storm of the early 80s, I have spoken of [previously?], cattle drifted for more than 100 miles from their home range. The cattle were/ scattered and mixed from one end of the range country to the other. Many ranchers didn't know whether or not [if?] he still had a [herd?] until after the Spring roundup.



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"Each Spring and Fall there was held a general roundup at which all ranchers participated. working as one big crew under one boss.

"During the Spring roundup the young stock would be [branded?] and the males castrated. and the herd counted. During the Fall roundup. the herd was counted and [cattle?] branded which were missed during the spring. All the strays were [drifted?] back to their home range. Those animals among the herd which we would want to [?] to market would be cut out and held separated from the other cattle. Such cattle would be hreded [carefully?] to keep the critters 11 from straying. We were not so particular about the others.

"My father was among the first who entered the business [?] driving cattle from Texas, to the Northern market, when the railroad penetrated into Kans..

"Father did not have much cash. In fact, when he made his first trip, he had just about enough cash to pay traveling expenses, [less?] wages. He cut out all the critters in our herd which were ready for the market, and then [gathered?] small bunches of cattle from small ranchers to make up a herd of 3500 head.

"Those cattle gathered from other ranchers were not [?] for at the time we gathered the animals, but driven to the market and sold, and then paid for. No note or other evidence of debt was given by father to any of the ranchers for whom he took cattle to market. When he returned, he paid each person the money due, less their share of the expense incurred making the drive and a precentage.

"We used a crew of from 12 to 14 men to handle a herd of [3000?] to 3500 cattle. I made two drives as a member of the driving crew. I worked as one of the pointers. A pointer is a term [applied?] to the rider who rides at the side of the herd keeping the animals together and headed in the proper direction.

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"After we had gathered the herd to be driven, we would make an early start in the [morning?] and drive the herd at a fast walking gait all day. The purpose [for?] [making?] a hard drive the [first?] day, was to be far away from the home bedding ground as possible the first night. If a herd would be near their home ground when 12 bedding time arrived, they would give us considerable trouble by trying to drift back to their usual bedding ground..

"With each days drive, the critters would become accustomed to the drive and the work of handling the herd would, likewise, become easier. After the first day we would allow the animals to take their own time and graze, but we keep the herd headed up the trail always. The pointers would allow the animals to spread out a distance of about a mile. Thus each critter would have a chance to get grass. If we would want to move the herd faster than their grazing gait, we would tighten up. That is to say, reduce the spread and urge the animals forward. Often we would want to make some certain point for bedding or reach a watering hole and would have to force drive.

"A herd of cattle will travel about 12 miles a day and graze the while, but the distance a herd would travel, as the crow flies, would average about seven miles.

"We followed the Chisholm Trail out of Coryell co., going through Hill, Johnson. Tarrant, Wise, Montigue and Clay Counties. Thence West to Doan's Crossing of the Red River and into the Territory (now Okla.). The trail was a general course Northward. We followed where the grazing and water was sufficient.

"From many directions in Texas, cattle were trailed to Doan's [crossing?] and during the hight of cattle driving, one could see herds fording the Red River most any time of the day.

"While driving a herd it was necessary to maintain constant watch over the herd at night. We worked four night riders and the 13 four riders worked four hour shifts and then would be releaved by another crew of four. Of course, the remainder of the crew were close at

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hand and could be called to duty in a few minutes. We all slept with most of our cloth on, scattered around the chuck wagon and if called to ride, all we had to do was to pull on our boots and grab our hat, in the event anything happened needing our help.

"Stampedes were the thing we dreaded, therefore, the night rider not [only?] watched the critters, but kept watch for anything which may approach the herd and scare it. Any unusual noise or object may scare one or two animals and their fright is taken up by the rest of the herd quickly. Because of that is fact, every precaution [was?] excersized to not disturb the cattle.

"We [always?] prayed and trusted for good weather while [?] trail drive. When a strom was approaching we were always set for anything and looked for tho worst to happen with the herd.

"When a storm descends on a [herd?] of cattle with lightening flashing and thunder clapping, the animals are going to move. [Especially so when the herd are on strange ground. A herd will drift with a strom and if lightening stricks ks close to a herd a stampede is most sure to follow. During a strom, at night, is the worst time for a stampede to accure.

"One must expect stampedes with cattle on a drive. We had to contend with stampedes [frequently?], on the two drives I made. We handled the runs successfully with the exception of two. I shall explain what we experienced one night while in the Territory. 14

"The weather was one of those real [Territory?] [busters?], which contain all the elements: wind, rain, lightening, and thunder.

"At the start of the storm, the herd was fretful, but we were holding it successfully, until a clap of thunder hit in the center of the cattle. That thunder seemed to split and start the herd running in several directions form the point of the hit. The herd did not act, as a running herd usually did which is all run in the same direction, but it divided into several directions.

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"Of course, it being dark, we could not see except when the lightening flashed, but the cows was riding trying to keep the animals together. We knew it was impossible to stop the run until the cattle became run down or the storm stopped.

"The storm stopped after an hour's time and we put what critters were left to milling, but we had only half of the herd. The rest were scattered to' the four winds'. which properly expresses the condition.

"We spent four days attempting to gather our herd, but were compelled to be satisfied with about [?] of the cattle. Some of the ranchers in the Territory had a few cattle added to their herd. This incident took place before the Cattlemen's Association was organized. and had extended its influence beyond Texas.

"The barganing of the present Cattlemens's Association was organized in 1877. and the organization soon established rule whereby strays picked up by others would be sold and the owner paid the salo money through the Association. 15 "After the Cattlemen's Association became [thoroughly?] organized, about the only loss the [doovers?] suffered from [straying?] animals would be when the cattle fell into the hands of rustlers. The rustlers would blot the brand, and by several methods change the brands. However, a large number of those cattle were intercepted, by the Association's inspectors, at the markets and thousand of dollars [were safed?] for the ranchers by the inspectors.

"When a drover or rancher lost cattle, the fact was reported to the Association's inspection department. If the critters were offered for sale at any of the markets containing the reported brands or brands which showed evidence of being tampered with, the seller would be compelled to give satisfactory account of how he came into possession of the cattle in question. If the party failed to produce the necessary facts, the cattle were sold and the money paid to the rightful owner, less expense.

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"Rustling became a well organized business in many sections of the range country. Coryell co., and its vicinity, was one of the localities where a tolerable lot of rustler trouble existed.

"The condition became so bad that the ranchers were forced to organized and deal with the situation directly. [Committees?] were organized to handle the rustlers. Those committees would notify a rustler to leave the community or [dosist?]. If the party failed to heed the demand, then the committee would catch the accused and hold a trail. 16 The trials were under a kangaroo court arrangement. [One?] member of the committee would act as the judge, another the prosecutor. The evidence for and against would be heard. The verdict would be rendered according to the majority/ vote of the committee. Many were sentenced to be hanged and the hanging would take place on the spot. Some of the accused were turned loose with a warning and given another chance.

"The actions of the committees in Coryell co., had a wholesome effect on the rustlers and their depredations were checked considerably.

"At the age of 17 I entered Baylor university at Waco. I / spent two years at Baylor and then engaged in teaching school in the rural districts for a period of two years. Following my period of teaching. I again entered the cattle business. I returned to Coryell co., and took charge of my father's ranch and continued in the business until the panic of 1893.

"At the time I returned to ranching, which was in 1876, the T.P. railroad had entered Fort Worth, then our market for cattle was Fort Worth.

"About this time conditions changed rapidly, due to fencing and settlers taking up land for cultivation. The large ranchers moved farther West and the small rancher fenced his range. The open range soon disappeared.

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"I fenced my range and continued to operate until the 1893 panic sot in. I then sold out my herd and engaged in various other lines of business.